

## Long-time West Springfield educator named 'Hometown Hero'

### Ruth Willemain honored at annual breakfast

The American Red Cross of Western Massachusetts has named Ruth Willemain, founder of Harmony House of Western Massachusetts, a "Hometown Hero" for 2018. The "Hometown Hero" award celebrates the spirit of humanitarianism by honoring local people who have shown courage, kindness, and unselfish character through acts of heroism in Western Massachusetts. Ms. Willemain, along with six additional local recipients, was honored at the 16th Annual American Red Cross Hometown Heroes Breakfast on March 22 at the Sheraton Springfield. Over 500 community leaders, friends, and supporters of the honorees and the Red Cross attended. The breakfast helps to support local disaster relief.

Ruth, after 45 years of teaching, including several in West Springfield Public Schools, dedicated her energy to hospice care and spending time with nursing home residents. After visiting a private, non-profit home for the terminally ill in the mid-west, she recognized the need for a similar home in Western Massachusetts. Her dream of Harmony House was born. Ruth, along with many friends and volunteers, has spent years raising funds to implement the Harmony House mission of providing a loving home offering compassionate care for the terminally ill who have limited or no resources for special care in their final stages of life. Harmony House is a non-profit home, staffed by trained volunteers including licensed nurses, caregivers, companions, and others. Recently celebrating her 84th birthday, Ruth works



Ruth Willemain, founder of Harmony House, a home for the terminally ill, was recently honored by the American Red Cross as a Hometown Hero for 2018. Ruth is shown here with Matthew Rice of the Arbella Insurance Foundation, a major supporter of the American Red Cross, along with Sy Becker (background), host of the event and reporter for WWLP-22 News.

tirelessly at spreading the word of Harmony House and continues to raise funds to support the home. Her care and compassion for the terminally ill earned Ruth the "Hometown Hero" honor and it is well deserved.

Harmony House is currently located on Pendleton Avenue in Chicopee, gratefully utilizing a home donated by a family who recognized the good work of

thus fulfilling Ruth's dream.

Harmony House is totally privately funded through the generosity of individuals, businesses, and foundations. Contributions are gratefully accepted at all times. Please visit the website at [www.harmonyhousewma.org](http://www.harmonyhousewma.org) or send your checks to Harmony House of Western Massachusetts, P.O. Box 6135, Holyoke, MA 01041. Harmony House is a 501(c)(3) corporation. If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please contact Harmony House at 413-331-5252 or by email at [harmonyhousewma@gmail.com](mailto:harmonyhousewma@gmail.com).

### Brass Ensemble concert Sunday

The Fanfare Brass Ensemble will present a concert of light popular and classical music on Sunday, April 15, at Grace Lutheran Church, 1151 Westfield St. West Springfield at 7:00 p.m.

The 10 part brass ensemble includes four trumpets, French horn, four trombones and tuba. Music performed by this professional group of musicians will include: Concerto in C Major for two trumpets by Vivaldi, West Side Story, Here's That Rainy Day, Raiders March, Dreamsville, Trumpeter's Lullaby, Glen Miller Medley, Amazing Grace, Phantom of the Opera, Easy Winners by Scott Joplin, The Cowboys by John Williams and Stars and Stripes Forever.

For more information contact David Neill at [tdn8@aol.com](mailto:tdn8@aol.com) or 413-686-5027. This concert is sponsored in part by the Cultural Council of Massachusetts and the West Springfield Cultural Council.